

# Ben Carson: A Man with Gifted Hands

By David E. Age: 11



Expository Research Section.....	1-2
Interview.....	3-4
Pictures.....	5-10
Recipe.....	11
Explanation of Genres.....	12
Works Cited.....	13

## Ben Carson: The Man With Gifted Hands

It was the year 1959 in the outskirts of Detroit, and a small, skinny African-American boy of 8 years old named Ben Carson sat in shock at what he had heard. He could not grasp what his mother Sonya Carson had just said. His mother told him his father was not going to be living with the Carson family anymore. When Ben finally overcame his grief, he realized something after a long period of time. The Carson family was getting poorer. Sonya Carson, Ben's mother, had only one job: cleaning people's houses. She only got \$100 a week. Ben heard the phrase, 'We just don't have the money, Bennie' from his mother many times. To a young boy, this was almost too much. There were so many things Ben wanted very badly, such as toys and candy. Finally, the Carson's became so poor, they had to rent their tiny house in Detroit, and stay with some relatives in Boston. Ben Carson had no idea how much God had in store for him through his trials. Even though it seemed impossible that a disobedient boy such as Ben Carson could become an exceedingly gifted Neurosurgeon who did what seemed impossible, after Ben offered his life up to God, he went on to accomplish amazing things.

Finally back in Detroit, Ben's grades were bad in school. And to make things worse for Ben, people made fun of him for his grades. One day, when a boy was taunting Ben for a wrong answer in English class, Ben suddenly smashed his lock from his locker into the boy's head. The boy had a 3 inch gash in his head. Ben protested later to the principle, 'It was almost an accident! I would never have hit him if I remembered the lock was in my hand!'

Sonya Carson saw her two kids spending small time on homework, and so much time on the TV. In her head, she was scared; scared that the kids might end up having only a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade education. She turned off the TV, and from then on, the Carson kids were only allowed to watch 3 shows a week, and at the end of every week, Curtis and Ben were to bring to their mom a written book report on 2 different books of their choice. Mrs. Carson wanted her kids to improve their knowledge, instead of watching TV so much. Mrs. Carson later made them memorize the times table.

This system went incredibly well for Ben. His grades started improving tremendously, and at school, people used to make fun of him for his poor grades. Now, all that stopped. Ben actually started to enjoy school. Ben's grades shot up, and now the same people who used to make fun of him were coming to him for help on homework.

When Ben got to high school, he started worrying less and less about school, and more about what he wore, and who he hung out with. His grades dropped, and he wasn't thinking about school as much. He tried to follow the crowd, and he spent so much time hanging out with friends late at night that he didn't care about school.

One day, in high school, Ben and a friend were listening to a radio. His friend kept turning the knob away from Ben's favorite station. Finally, in an unlikely fit of rage, Ben tried to stab his friend with a knife. Ben ran as fast as he could to his house. He was ashamed and couldn't bear to face anyone. If his friend hadn't worn a belt with a thick metal buckle, he could've died. Ben could have killed his friend. Ben locked himself in his bathroom, and prayed for God's forgiveness regarding his lack of reading the Bible, his anger, and his lack of working, and for worrying about what he would wear. Ben kept seeing the image of his friends' face. Ben read his Bible in the bathroom, and prayed. *God, You can free me forever from this destructive personality trait. If this goes on, I'll end up doing things a lot worse than trying to stab one of my best friends*, he prayed. When he came out 4 hours later, Ben Carson was a changed boy.

After that incident, Ben worried less about what others thought, and more about school. Through high deserved grades and hard work, Ben finally was able to get a scholarship to Yale University. Ben had decided he was going to be a neurosurgeon; which is someone who operates on the brain. At first he considered being a heart surgeon (cardiothoracic surgeon). *But*, he mused. *We know so little about the brain!*

He went on to go to medical school at the University of Michigan. After that, he did his residency at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, MD. Ben did incredible throughout his residency, and before it was even over, he was promoted to Head of Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins! *Look at me*, Ben thought. *Here I am the chief pediatric neurosurgeon at Johns Hopkins at 33. This can't be happening to me.* At Johns Hopkins, Ben encountered many unusual problems with kids. One little girl had seizures almost every waking minute of her life. Ben did a hemispherectomy operation on her, which meant he removed the part of her brain that was causing the seizures. The girl recovered and didn't have any more problems regarding her brain. Another surgery that Ben Carson is renowned for is the Binder twins' surgery. Two little German baby boys had been born joined at the back of their head. Ben's surgery lasted over 8 hours. It was incredibly intricate and complicated. Ben hit many places with bleeding, and everyone thought it was nearly hopeless. But finally, after many long hours of surgery, the Binder twins were separated for the first time in their lives. They went on to live normal lives after the surgery, now separated. Ben thanked God over and over again for the outcome of the surgery. He could barely believe what had happened. *Is this real? Is this happening?* Ben asked himself time and time again. God had used Ben Carson for his glory, even though it would have seemed hopeless that a rebellious kid could become an incredibly gifted Neurosurgeon.

# Ben Carson Interview:

## 2/11/2001

### Questions and Answers from a prominent Neurosurgeon

Reporter: Hello ladies and gentlemen!! Today we have the pleasure of having the esteemed neurosurgeon Ben Carson from Johns Hopkins Hospital with us today! Please take a seat Dr. Carson!

Ben Carson: Thank you Frank! \*sits down\* It's a pleasure to be here!

Reporter: No, no, the pleasure's all mine. So, Dr. Carson, how did you defeat the years of racial prejudice and become a respected neurosurgeon?

Ben Carson: Well, it wasn't easy I can assure you that. There are three main incidents I can remember. My brother Curtis and I used to jump on trains on the way to school. I did it mainly because Curtis did. And of course we never told our mother. Curtis would throw his school bag onto the train, and then jump on. I always went on trains that were slower than his. One day, when Curtis wasn't with me, a gang of white teenagers came towards me. I was small and skinny, as well as totally defenseless. The biggest one smacked me with a big stick, and they called me all the horrible names they could think of. Most of the insults were against names against black people and me. I never jumped trains again. At the end of eighth grade, I experienced a second racial injustice incident. At the end of the year, the school handed out awards for best academic progress. After I had won it, the teacher handing out the awards started reprimanding the Caucasians for not winning. It was clear what she meant: *How could you all let a black person get ahead of you in your studies? A black person shouldn't be ahead of a class where everyone else is white.* At the next incident, Curtis and I were playing football for our neighborhood league. Some people did not like black people playing. One day, a group of white young men who had seen some of our games walked towards me and Curtis after a football practice. They told us that if they ever saw us come back they would throw us in the river. We never did come back. God helped me not just despair and give up hope on becoming anything through these trials. I never did talk to my mother about the football or train incidents. But, I still was able to not let that feeling of being a loser overcome me. I think all these incidents taught me something. I think they taught me to not be horrible to people. Overall, I think they were valuable lessons.

Reporter: Wow! That must have been awful!

Ben Carson: It was.

Reporter: So, jumping forward many years to your medical life...have you ever had to separate another pair of Siamese twins like the Binder twins?

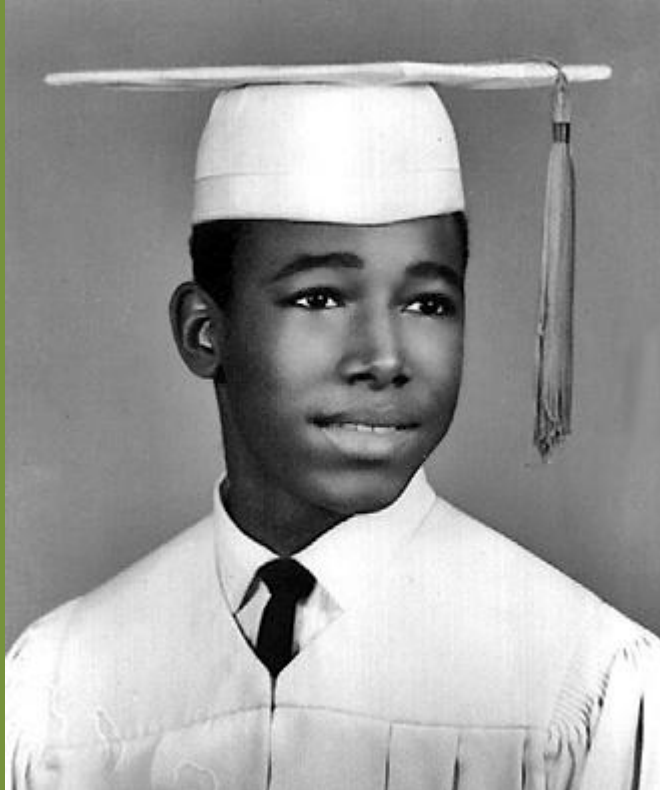
Ben Carson: Yes, two other pairs. Both had the same doctor. His name was Dr. Mokgokong. And both pairs of twins were from South Africa. The first pair were girls. The girls' names were Nthabiseng and Mahlatse Makwaeba. Unfortunately...\*pauses, looking down\*the girls didn't make it. The twins both depended on each other. One needed the other's kidney, and the other needed her sisters' heart. One passed away during the surgery, and the other died two days later. The other set of twins were boys. Their names were Joseph and Luka Banda. Their surgery was intricate and incredibly complicated. The whole surgery took 28 hours. Joseph and Luka recovered and they started recuperating soon after the surgery.

Reporter: Well! That was a very interesting story Mr. Carson! Thank you so much for being with us!

Ben Carson: No, no. The pleasure was all mine!

# *A Picture Gallery of Ben Carson*

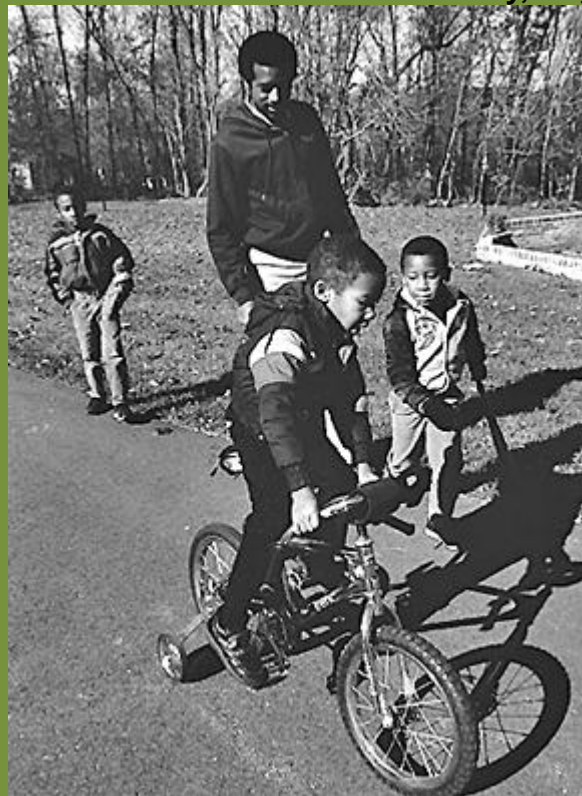
Ben Carson's graduation from Southwestern High School, Detroit, Michigan, 1969.



**Ben Carson celebrates his graduation from Yale University in 1973, with his mother, Sonya, and his wife, Candy**



**Dr. Benjamin Carson with his three sons Murray, BJ, and Rheoyce.**





**Ben spends quality time with his children at a basketball court.**



**Dr. Carson consults with a parent about his child's medical condition.**





**Dr. Carson encourages young people to "THINK BIG" at a lecture.**





Benjamin S. Carson, MD, director of pediatric neurosurgery at the Johns Hopkins Hospital.

**Dr. Carson in his scrubs (doctor's suit).**



**Dr. Carson receiving an award from President Bush.**



**Dr. Ben Carson with his wife Candy.**



# BEN CARSON BREAD:

## Ingredients:

3 cups granulated kindness  
2 teaspoons of Godliness  
1 cup heavily whipped diligence  
3 tablespoons of wisdom  
1 cup of gifted hands  
Pinch of Humility and Respect to taste.

## Directions:

1. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Put the 3 cups of granulated kindness in a bowl. Add the 2 teaspoons of Godliness, and mix for 5 minutes. Then add the 1 cup gifted hands and mix for another 2 minutes. Put mixture in a large baking pan.
3. Then, in a separate bowl, blend the 1 cup heavily whipped diligence and the 3 tablespoons of wisdom in the bowl.
4. Put the larger pan in the oven for 10 minutes. Halfway through, pour the mixture of heavily whipped diligence and wisdom over the bread. When the bread comes out, it should be lightly golden-brown, and soft. Lightly sprinkle a pinch of Humility and Respect over it. Should yield 6 servings. Enjoy!

## Explanation of Additional Genres:

Interview: To my knowledge, Dr. Ben Carson never had an interview to that exact wording. However, all the answers that Dr. Carson provided are non-fictional. Dr. Carson really did experience racial injustice issues growing up. I am not sure if that is what he learned from those incidents, or if he even learned from them at all. The interviewer is a fictional character. The information about the different surgeries was factual.

Pictures: All of these pictures and captions are non-fictional pictures of Dr. Carson.

Recipe: To my knowledge, there is no such bread named “Ben Carson Bread.” However, all of the ingredients are actual personality traits from Dr. Carson.



## Works Cited:

Bergman, Jerry. "Benjamin Carson. The Pediatric Neurosurgeon with Gifted Hands." Jan. 2009. <http://www.icr.org/article/benjamin-carson-pediatric-neurosurgeon-with-gifted/>.

Carson, Ben. Gifted Hands. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990.

Gregg, Deborah Shaw Lewis. Today's Heroes: Ben Carson. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zonderkidz, 2002.

## Works Cited for Additional Genres:

Interview-Carson pp. 27-33

Recipe-Carson p. 23

Pictures-Carson pp. 89